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Anthony J. Cernera
Sacred Heart University

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The Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University: An Example of Fostering Dialogue and Understanding

ANTHONY J. CERNERA

N*ostra Aetate* (Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, 1965), and subsequent documents, *Guidelines and Suggestions* (1974), *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Catholic Church* (1985), and *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (1998), prepared the path for a theological and educational agenda that was both corrective (the purging of anti-Jewish material from textbooks, catechisms, and preaching) and provided an opportunity for renewal, especially in the growth in theological study and dialogue between Christians and Jews.

Since the founding of the first Interfaith Center in 1953, the Institute for Judeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University (IJCS), dialogue between Christians and Jews has become an essential priority of Christian churches. Today, there are twenty-seven centers of interreligious dialogue and education operating in the United States. The history of the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut, provides a good view of the way such centers have engaged in interreligious dialogue and education.

Nostra Aetate in Context

Many Church historians point to a symbolic turning point in Christian-Jewish relations at the 1960 meeting between Pope John XXIII and French Jewish scholar, Jules Isaac. Their friendship

would lead the pope to support the reconsideration and reversal of teachings of contempt for Jews and would eventually hold up interreligious relations between Christians and Jews as an important priority of the Church.

A broader study of the texts from the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) points to a renewal movement in Church thinking that was part of the larger consciousness of the Council. For example, *Dei Verbum* (1964), the *Constitution on Divine Revelation*, provided the theological framework for the reversal in Catholic Church teachings on Judaism by affirming God's lasting covenant with the Jewish people. In this way, the sacred books of the Old Testament were acknowledged as the true Word of the One Living God. In rejecting the former substitution theory of the Church, which taught that the New Testament replaced the Old Testament, *Dei Verbum* states:

Now the economy of salvation, foretold, recounted and explained by the sacred authors appears as the true Word of God in the books of the Old Testament, that is why these books, divinely inspired, preserve a lasting value. For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (*Dei Verbum*, 14)

It is within this framework that *Nostra Aetate* marked a critical milestone in the history of Christian-Jewish relations and provided the opportunity to open and sustain a dialogue with non-Christian religions, but in particular, with Jews who share a common spiritual patrimony as people of Revelation and the Word. The document explicitly rejected every form of persecution and discrimination. Its insistence on dialogue opened up profoundly renewed relations between Christians and Jews:

Since Christians and Jews have such a common spiritual heritage, this sacred Council wishes to encourage and further mutual understanding and appreciation. This can

be obtained, especially, by way of biblical and theological inquiry and through friendly discussions. (*Nostra Aetate*, 4)

Of all the influences that shaped the text of *Nostra Aetate*, the living memory of the *Shoah* prodded the conscience of the Church to begin a self-examination concerning its treatment of Jews over the ages. During the debates over the drafting of *Nostra Aetate*, Boston's Cardinal Richard Cushing made the issue more than a theological case of differences, and turned it into a penitential plea to the council fathers when he asked:

How many [Jews] have suffered in our own time? How many died because Christians were indifferent and kept silent? If in recent years, not many Christian voices were raised against those injustices, at least let ours now be heard in humility.¹

The Second Vatican Council also called for the Church to be in solidarity with the entire human family in recognizing the communitarian nature of human activity as a response to God working in the world. *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) also emphasized that solidarity cannot be forced or achieved at once, but must be realized through a process of dialogue. Dialogue was identified as the chief means by which the dignity of all people is honored in the common search for the truth of human existence and the shared responsibility to seek solutions to the most pressing social problems of the day. *Gaudium et Spes* further asserted that the conditions of dialogue demand truth and liberty in an exchange that seeks not to obscure differences but to clarify them:

Doctrinal dialogue should be initiated with courage and sincerity, with the greatest freedom and with reference. It focuses on doctrinal questions which are of concern to the parties to dialogue. They have different opinions but by common effort they try to improve mutual understanding, to clarify matters on which they agree, and if possible, to

enlarge the areas of agreement. In this way, the parties to dialogue can enrich each other. (*Gaudium et Spes*, 56)

Refining the Stance of Dialogue: The Guidelines and the Notes

Nostra Aetate was written for Catholics, but it signaled to Jews and to the world that the Catholic Church was willing to begin anew on a pilgrimage of faith with other religions. With the experience of nine years and many approaches taken in different countries to implementing *Nostra Aetate*, the 1974 document, *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration, Nostra Aetate* (issued by the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with Jews), proposed some practical applications in areas of the Church's life.

Among the four areas addressed by the *Guidelines*—dialogue, liturgy, education, and social action—it was the document's call for educational reform that was particularly important. The *Guidelines* examined Catholic teaching materials, the formation of educators in schools, seminaries, and universities, and the role of sustained scholarly enquiry in the field of exegesis, theology, history, and sociology. Echoing *Nostra Aetate*, the document also called attention to the special role of Catholic higher education in contributing to deeper study *vis-à-vis* Judaism, and in particular, the promotion of scholarly research and dialogue in collaboration with Jewish scholars.

The 1985 document *Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis* (issued by the same Commission) focused more on the correct ways to teach and preach about Jews and Judaism. It provided important educational resources that were needed to continue to remove anti-Jewish material from textbooks and catechisms, including some apologetic approaches used by the clergy for preaching. It also addressed Christian religious education in all forms. The effort was to indicate more clearly the Jewish roots of concepts such as covenant, law, prophets, messiah, manna, Passover, redemption, and testament, to name a few.

Notes addressed the critical issue that truth in dialogue was not possible without truth in teaching and preaching, and stressed that the Church no longer “superseded” or “replaced” an antiquated Judaism but is rooted in Judaism and grafted on the good stock of Israel. Just as Catholics (since 1959) no longer prayed at the Good Friday liturgy for “the perfidious Jews” but “that the Jews will be faithful to the covenant as they hear it,” the Church’s self-understanding was organically related to understanding the Jewish people in light of their own religious experience. In its special emphasis on correct teachings about Judaism, *Notes* recognized the importance of interreligious education for the entire faith community and the special responsibility of local educators and religious leaders in the overall mission of restoring relations between Catholics and Jews.

Historical Developments Since Vatican II: Creating a Culture of Dialogue

The founding of the Institute for Judeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University preceded the Second Vatican Council, but did not arise out of a vacuum. The theological investigations and social activism of its chief architects, Monsignor John Oesterreicher and Dominican Sister Rose Thering, originated in their personal encounters with anti-Semitism and galvanized their pioneering work. The legacy of the IJCS in the work of restoring relations between Christians and Jews cannot be overestimated. Additionally, the Institute gave form to a sustained interfaith dialogue on both a theoretical and practical level that would lay the foundation for the future of interreligious study both within the academy and independent of it.

The time between the establishment of the first study center at Seton Hall University and the proliferation of new centers that began in earnest in the late 1980s was one of an emerging culture of dialogue between Christians and Jews inspired by the example and ministry of Pope John Paul II. As a public figure, Pope John Paul II never lost an opportunity to express visibly his love for the Jewish people. The most profound examples of this personal witness were the papal pilgrimages to key historical Jewish sites,

especially those associated with the *Shoah*, which came to characterize his papacy.

Nearly a decade before Pope John Paul II commissioned the statement, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, his mission of reconciliation with the Jews illustrated the educational value of symbolic gestures. Unmistakable acts of good will that recognized the past sufferings and still raw wounds of the Jewish people were shared by Christians not only in remembrance but in repentance. Beginning with his 1979 visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp, followed by his convening of the first World Day of Prayer for Peace (1986) and leading up to his visiting the Great Synagogue in Rome (1986), Pope John Paul II sought to create a culture of dialogue between Christians and Jews by urging reconciliation as the base from which all true dialogue emerges.

In a 2001 lecture at Sacred Heart University, Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity and the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, reflected on the work of Pope John Paul II as exemplifying the role of wisdom and witness in the search for the truth. Cardinal Kasper drew an analogy between the ministry of John Paul II, the encounter of witness and wisdom (faith and reason), and the defining role of the Catholic University in the mission of the Church. He described the ministry of Pope John Paul II as an expression and deep synthesis of faith and reason. "When we speak of truth," said the Cardinal, "we are not merely referring to the truth sought by our own intellect, but to that which comes from God through revelation."²

The culture of dialogue advanced by Pope John Paul II did not diminish the role of theological enquiry but also insisted on its necessary complement in human experience. As an expression of the search for truth, symbolic gestures witnessed to truth in service of the greatest good, which is the dignity of all life. For the work of a Center dedicated to interreligious dialogue and understanding, this translated into the mutual recognition of the truth of the Other (despite theological differences) as a daughter or son of God. This recognition became a shared work of fostering truth and peace.

The Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding: An Example of Fostering Dialogue and Understanding

The Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding (CCJU) of Sacred Heart University was established as a research and academic division of the University in 1992. Its structure within the University setting and its dual audience of faculty/students and a broader national/international network of theological scholars followed the example set at Seton Hall University (IJCS). However, the founding of these two centers was separated by about forty years. By the time CCJU opened its doors, Holocaust education and activism had already taken firm root in Centers, schools, and government policy initiatives. In 1992 there were three independent Centers, and four Centers affiliated with a colleges or universities that were primarily local and focused on their respective academic and local public communities. With the growing intensity of dialogue between Christians and Jews evident in documents and statements on the international and national levels, the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding began to create forums for national and international dialogue that could be shared with wide audiences.

In the same year that CCJU was founded, Pope John Paul II issued the first revised catechism since the sixteenth-century one that followed the Council of Trent. The new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* integrated the current teachings of the Church with respect to Judaism and directed them to a wider audience which included all Catholics. The responsibility for promulgating these teaching lay in the hands of pastors.

The culture of dialogue between Christians and Jews that defined *Nostra Aetate* and subsequent documents took a critical turn with the appearance of *We Remember: Reflections on the Shoah* (issued by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews). *We Remember* called forth a deeper movement in interreligious dialogue by signaling that intellectual knowledge of the Other was a critical first but not a final step in the restoration of relations between Christians and Jews. This stage in Christian-Jewish understanding was well-prepared by the emergence of Holocaust

Centers, Holocaust studies programs and departments, and Holocaust Museums and Memorials throughout the United States and abroad. Their educational mission was to ensure the accurate memory of the *Shoah* for future generations.

A significant contribution of *We Remember* was to make the critical link between the historical and moral lessons of the *Shoah*. It was not enough to make the historical record accurate and accessible. The Holocaust needed to be understood on the level of morality. The antecedent statements of forgiveness and reconciliation issued by the Catholic bishops from Hungary (1992), Germany (1995), Poland (1995), United States (1995), Switzerland (1997), and France (1998) took on deeper meaning as a new era of friendship and ethical responsibility between Christians and Jews had now begun.

Two years later, in 2000, the Vatican established full diplomatic relations with the state of Israel. By formalizing diplomatic relations, the Vatican opened the doors to deeper political, moral, and theological dialogue between Jews and Christians. In the same year, acknowledging the increasing number of statements from official church bodies (both Roman Catholic and Protestant) that expressed both repentance for the Christian mistreatment of Jews and Judaism and a commitment to reform Christian teaching, numerous prominent Jewish scholars and religious leaders of North America issued the statement, *Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*. This statement insisted that the challenges of living in a religiously pluralistic world demanded creative responses from the Jewish community:

We believe these changes merit a thoughtful Jewish response . . . We believe it is time for Jews to learn about the efforts of Christians to honor Judaism. We believe it is time for Jews to reflect on what Judaism may now say about Christianity.

The mechanism established for Christian-Jewish dialogue in the first years of CCJU was to become a formidable vehicle on both the international and national levels for the promulgation of theological inquiry, scholarship, and education. CCJU combined

the academic and research components of the university in a manner modeled on the IJCS prototype. It recognized and addressed the multiple audiences for the interfaith message (scholars, religious leaders, local community). This had been highlighted by some of the early local Centers and their efforts in local educational outreach to schools, churches, and synagogues. The Center also began to elaborate multi-dimensional strategies to accomplish its ambitious goals. The CCJU model was also informed by lessons from the Centers of Holocaust Education that pointed to the importance in bridging the gap between the scholarly community and the general public by making interfaith study and dialogue widely accessible.

Four core values defined the work of CCJU in promoting interreligious dialogue and understanding on a national and international level. It was to be a center for teachers and learners; a center that promoted substantive symbolic gestures; a center for learning in the presence of the Other; and a center for educating leaders.

A core conviction of CCJU is that the development and passing on of theological scholarship requires a process of dialogue that links knowledge with the mutual respect and reconciliation that it seeks to achieve. It attempts to enact a pedagogy built on the educational theory that in interreligious dialogue, all are teachers and learners. Each faith tradition has something to teach about its distinctive beliefs and practices and each has something to learn from the Other. This experience has the potential to enrich each tradition's understanding of the Other, while also deepening its own religious identity. The scholarship needed to sustain interreligious learning recognizes dialogue—and the new relations between Christians and Jews that come from that dialogue—as critical to the ultimate aims of scholarly inquiry.

An early example of implementing this conviction at CCJU was the 1992 program, the New Catechism Conferences. Conferences in major cities across the United States were geared toward priests, bishops, rabbis, and religious leaders and educators. Each conference featured Catholic and Jewish speakers who presented their perspective on the new Catholic Catechism. In the belief that the Catechism was a reference point for how the documents of the

past thirty years concerning Christian-Jewish relations were embedded in the teachings of the Church, CCJU saw the text as important both for educating a new generation of Catholics in the substance and spirit of the Vatican II and as a vehicle for promoting dialogue between Christians and Jews.

Initiatives at CCJU expanded again in 1995 when it embarked on a Teacher Education Conference in cooperation with the German Society for Christian-Jewish Collaboration. In 1996, CCJU also sponsored a symposium on values in education. The conference made the connection between reform in values education and the diminishing of violence through pedagogical principles that embrace reconciliation. In hindsight, the conference was a harbinger of ideas promoted in the 1998 document, *We Remember*, which held up the need for *teshuvah* (a turning away from wrong and a returning to a right relationship) in Christian-Jewish relations.

Symbolic Gestures of Substance

In addition to important theological and scholarly work, the deepening of dialogue between Christians and Jews increasingly took place through the use of symbolic gestures that raised political awareness. It also underscored the difficult lesson that knowledge of the Other must be accompanied by the repentance of past faults in order that a trusting and fruitful relationship can be established and sustained. Beginning in the late 1990s, the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding embarked on a strategy for making use of substantive symbolic gestures as a core part of its educational agenda. CCJU developed programs, conferences, and publications that educated to a deeper level of reflection by showing the value of such gestures to inform theologically, challenge morally, and lead to respectful dialogue.

One such educational and fundraising program began in 1996 with the aim of recognizing examples of Jewish and Christian leaders who had significantly advanced the cause of interreligious understanding with its annual *Nostra Aetate* Awards Program. The

first *Nostra Aetate* award recipients were Cardinal John O'Connor of the Archdiocese of New York and Connecticut Senator Joseph Lieberman. Now in its tenth year, the awards program seeks to create national and international awareness for the work of leading figures in interreligious dialogue who symbolize the tenets and the promise of *Nostra Aetate*.

Another effort was a conference sponsored in Auschwitz, on the theme of "Religion and Violence, Religion and Peace." Participants included Jewish, Christian, and Muslim leaders from twelve countries. The conference was a historic first for its inclusion of five Orthodox rabbis in an interfaith discussion. Their inclusion overturned the Orthodox prohibition (with its roots in the anti-Semitic aggression of the Inquisition) of participating in interreligious dialogue of a theological nature. Other symbolic gestures that taught theologically as well as morally included the 1998 CCJU visit to the Holy Land to establish a Papal Forest in Nazareth to be shared by surrounding Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities. CCJU also participated in the Interreligious Assembly for Peace held at the Vatican (1999). Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz, executive director of CCJU, was one of twelve Jewish leaders attending.

In all these events, CCJU both initiated and partnered with interreligious organizations, in addition to the Vatican, in teaching the knowledge of the Other through a process of dialogue that embraced both theological reflection and reconciliation. This was executed in the context of highly visible symbolic places, people, and programs that explicitly made the connection between interreligious knowledge of the Other and the transformation that is possible when the mistakes of the past are no longer denied or revised but remembered in order to facilitate repentance.

Using the document *We Remember* as an illustration, the critical link between reflection and repentance may be argued to have been most forcefully made not in 1998 (when the document was issued) but in 2000, when Pope John Paul II made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The document called for *teshuvah*, and earlier the pope's 2000 visit symbolically enacted *teshuvah*. The document taught the failings

of members of the Church with respect to the *Shoah*, while the papal visit transformed that awareness to a deeper level of reflection and repentance within the worldwide Catholic community.

Leaders of the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding accompanied John Paul II on this pilgrimage, which included a visit to the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth coinciding with the Roman Catholic Church's worldwide Feast of the Annunciation, the day of March 25 when Catholics commemorate the Angel Gabriel's announcement of the "good news" to the young Jewish woman, Mary, that she would conceive and bear her son, Jesus. John Paul's visit extended the "good news" to symbolize reconciliation and peace with the Jewish people. Likewise, a visit to the Papal Forest, mentioned above, symbolized the "common ground" from which the growth in Jewish-Christian relations would flourish in the years to come.

The visceral impact of Pope John Paul II's visit to the Western Wall, the holiest site of the Jewish people, and his prayer of forgiveness made on this site was well-described by Israeli Ambassador to the Holy See, Aharon Lopez, when he stated: "By following the Jewish tradition, he won the hearts of Israelis."³ This historic journey of healing concluded with the visit to the Tent of Remembrance at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial that bears witness to the six million Jews who perished under Nazi tyranny. Israeli Prime Minister Eliud Barak described the event as the climax of the historic pilgrimage of reconciliation and a moment that held within it 2,000 years of Jewish-Christian history.

Learning With the Other

A key initiative of the Center for showing how to teach about the Other was the five-year series of international conferences on the theme "What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Us?" The conferences held in Jerusalem, Rome, Edmonton (Canada), Bamberg (Germany), and Fairfield, Connecticut (United States) were based on the principle that adequately understanding the

Other must be complemented by the need for the Other to be presented accurately.

In this form of educational engagement, each participant and tradition is able to experience being the “other” to someone else. The result of this dialogical process was an educational method that was both theological and pedagogical in approach. In 2006, CCJU published selected papers from the conferences in a volume titled *What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Us?*, representing the responses of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scholars to this key question.

Educating Leaders

From the time of its inception, CCJU had focused its teaching on scholars, religious leaders and educators. Programs such as the catechetical and Holocaust teacher education conferences, ongoing lecture series, and publications (including the semi-annual publication, *CCJU Perspective*) enabled the Center to reach a broad national audience of key influencers in educational and pastoral ministries. In this context, CCJU’s teaching was directed, at one level, to fostering understanding of Judaism in its work with local educators and religious leaders in schools, churches, and synagogues.

At another level, CCJU’s international conferences for advancing theological inquiry and dialogue reached an even greater audience of scholars and religious leaders via publication in a variety of volumes, including *Towards Greater Understanding* (1997), *Religion and Violence, Religion and Peace* (1999), *Religion, Violence and Peace: Continuing Conversations and Study Guide* (2003), and the previously mentioned *What Do We Want the Other To Teach About Us?* (all published by the Sacred Heart University Press).

A third initiative by CCJU to educate leaders is its Annual Institute for Seminarians and Rabbinical Students. Launched in 2000 to introduce Jewish and Christian aspiring clergy to the questions, problems, and opportunities they may encounter in Christian-Jewish relations, the Annual Institute recognized that the education of emerging leaders was essential for future growth in

interreligious dialogue. Besides offering students a forum for interreligious dialogue, access to first-class speakers, and materials and resources on Christian-Jewish understanding, the Annual Institute often serves as a springboard for continuing relationships between the future Jewish and Christian religious leaders of the United States. When nearly two hundred seminarians and rabbinical students had participated in the CCJU Institute, an additional program, *Colleagues in Dialogue*, was established to sustain the study, conversations and relationships begun at the Institute. This program has been reconvening annually since 2005.

The sustained effort by the Center to support young religious leaders was also the inspiration for another program launched in September 2005, the U.S. Bishops Study Tour. During the first study tour, Rabbi Joseph Ehrenkranz, executive director of the Center, and I, in my official capacity as president of Sacred Heart University, led six American bishops and two Orthodox rabbis to Krakow and Rome. The purpose of the study tour was to pilot a program that would help to foster interreligious dialogue among world religious leaders that could become a model for all religious leaders. The goal was for the leaders to learn from each other the theological, historical, and spiritual connections between Jews and Christians and to build bridges of understanding, thus preparing the way for generations to come.

Through a process of immersion, the bishops and rabbis visited the Nazi camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau. This visit formed the basis for an honest dialogue on the meaning of the *Shoah* for Jews and Christians. On the second part of the study tour, in Rome, the group met with leaders of the Vatican's Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews to discuss ways of improving dialogue worldwide. At the Great Synagogue of Rome, the city where the Jewish people have the longest continuous history in Europe, participants learned together about prayer and liturgy in the Jewish tradition. Later, the Israeli Ambassador to the Holy See, Oded Ben-Hure, led a discussion on the importance of understanding the state of Israel for restoring world Jewry. The U.S. Bishops Study Tour program will continue with a second group in September 2007.

Summary

The origins and development of the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University illustrate that the growth and success of this Center is indebted to the visionary work of the Institute for Judeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University. Many Centers around the world have together made center-based work the preeminent institutional expression of interreligious dialogue following the Second Vatican Council. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to a Center, since both the content and the audience for such work is broad and diverse. The growth of local centers, either independent or affiliated with the academy, facilitates educational outreach directed at teachers, local Christian and Jewish religious leaders, and the broader community. These Centers will continue to be critical in providing a grassroots orientation to interreligious knowledge and dialogue.

The CCJU model of interreligious dialogue that has emerged over the past fifteen years is distinguished by a national and international presence among religious, educational, and public leaders for the purposes of advancing scholarship and fostering relationships of mutual respect among Christians and Jews. Along with an emphasis on scholarship and intellectual exchange, the history of CCJU also underscores the important human dimension of forging relationships of trust and openness. Based on its past successes, the Center will continue to foster interfaith study and dialogue in the presence of the Other as an ideal model of learning.

Future Challenges

Looking forward to future challenges and opportunities for center-based work in interreligious dialogue, it may be said that more than forty years after *Nostra Aetate*, centers for dialogue and understanding have helped to create a culture of dialogue. They have educated a great number and variety of people to a reinvigorated model of dialogue. Whereas religious dialogue in the not-too-distant past was defined by negotiation, compromise, or

correction, the work of the Centers has transformed that process. Today, dialogue assumes an attitude of openness and a respect for the truth of the Other, as well as the freedom to express that truth. Dialogue now places more importance on the act of listening, rather than speaking, to the Other. Dialogue is seen in its role in spiritual/pastoral and intellectual growth, as the deeper understanding of the Other's beliefs, as a means of enriching one's own.

On the immediate horizon of the interreligious study center, four challenges appear:

1) *The violence of some religious groups in acts of terror and aggression that threaten to derail even the most committed attempts at sustained dialogue among Jews, Christians, and Muslims.* Dialogue requires participants to listen before all else and requires finding equal partners on all sides of the divide who are willing to enter into respectful dialogue and come to reconciliation over the errors of past relations.

2) *The promotion of continuing theological scholarship in the field of interreligious study.* The questions that must be asked and answered are "How can the best thinkers among emerging scholars be attracted to the field and how can universities support such scholars and scholarship?"

3) *Bringing the agenda of interreligious understanding into the public square.* "Interreligious" should not mean that only religious leaders or educators are the dialogue partners. National and international public leaders must be more deliberately brought into interreligious conversations promoted by centers.

4) *The quest to sustain momentum.* This is a challenge that every religious movement eventually faces. In the late 1960s, *Nostra Aetate* provided the catalyst for a worldwide renewal in theology and relationships. Private funding for Holocaust education and awareness in the 1980s helped to reeducate generations of Americans on the recorded history and moral lessons of the *Shoah*. From the late 1990s up until his death, Pope John Paul II's letters and symbolic gestures invigorated interreligious dialogue by giving it a dimension that was capable of moving the worldwide Christian

community towards reconciliation with Jews. The work of interreligious education, dialogue, and understanding has from its earliest days rested on the shoulders of great visionaries. As the efforts of interreligious centers continue and expand, the challenge will be one of future leadership. It is my hope that many will take up this noble vocation.

Notes

1. Quoted in Philip A. Cunningham, "Uncharted Waters: The Future of Catholic-Jewish Relations," *Commonweal* 133, no. 13 (July 14, 2006).
2. Walter Cardinal Kasper, "The Role of the Church and a Catholic University in the Contemporary World," *CCJU Perspective* 10, no. 1 (fall 2003), 32.
3. Aharon Lopez, quoted in David L. Coppola, "A Pilgrimage of Peace," *CCJU Perspective* 7, no. 1 (spring 2000), 17.